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ABSTRACT

Every year more intercollegiate speech and debate programs are eliminated from universities and colleges. Shrinking resources for higher education make it difficult to sustain extra or co-curricular activities without endowments and alumni support. Alumni support begins by cultivating a respect in undergraduates for speech and debate as a privilege. As alumni, they should be encouraged to give something back to their former speech program; they should be honored with traditions, stories, respect as graduates of a distinguished program. Alumni relations begin with contact, a steady flow of mail informing alumni about what and how the debate program has been doing both financially and in terms of performance. Demonstration debates for alumni are also a good idea. Before soliciting funds, it is helpful to have a brochure that describes and advertises the program; data bases should be created; and advice sought from development offices. According to David Dunlop, director of special gifts at Cornell University, there are several methods of fund raising, including speculative fund raising, individualized fund raising, and nurturing fund raising. Speculative fund raising consists simply of asking for gifts, while individualized and nurturing fund raising consist mainly of cultivating a relationship that will yield gifts, probably large gifts, eventually, over time. The latter is far more effective in raising large amounts of money for endowments. (Examples of fund raising appeals are attached.) (TB)

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR BUILDING ALUMNI SUPPORT AND FUNDING A FORENSICS PROGRAM TO ENSURE CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAM DURING YOUR TENURE AND LONG AFTER YOUR DEPARTURE

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I

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR BUILDING ALUMNI SUPPORT AND FUNDING A FORENSICS PROGRAM TO ENSURE CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAM DURING YOUR TENURE AND LONG AFTER YOUR DEPARTURE.

Every year we hear from our colleagues about more intercollegiate speech and debate programs that have been eliminated from universities and colleges. We keep letters on our computers about the values of speech and debate and send them to deans and department chairs where programs struggle to continue. Occasionally our letters persuade administrators to find means to extend the programs one more year but shrinking resources for higher education make it more difficult to sustain extra or co-curricular activities without endowments and alumni support.

Many speech and debate coaches are aware that I have done much fundraising for the Cornell Forensics program and they have suggested that I provide information on how it is done. After searching through years of forensics literature I discovered that even though directors of forensics have participated no one in our field has ever written about fundraising and alumni relations. Therefore, this paper will be grounded on my personal experience with the sincere desire of helping struggling programs survive.

I was hired by Cornell University in 1980 to teach five classes of oral communication. I discovered that the university had a long history of speech and debate and was very surprised to learn from my department chair that there was no current faculty coach, advisor, or financial support for a forensics program. I started fundraising sixteen years ago for the existence of a speech and debate team. Now, I fund raise to ensure the existence of a speech and debate program at my university after my departure. Alumni relations and fundraising are fast becoming major components of jobs for anyone who directs extra- curricular programs. This paper will stress the importance of encouraging our students to be active alumni when they leave their alma maters, discuss how to establish relations with alumni, and how to build endowments. The most important place to begin is with our present students.

EDUCATING OUR STUDENTS TO BE ACTIVE ALUMNI

Emphasize that speech and debate participation is a privilege.
Encourage students go give back when they graduate.
Establish traditions to value and honor alumni.
Use stories and legends to show respect for alumni.

Whether a student is on a forensics scholarship at a university with a tradition of strong commitment to speech and debate, or at a university where administrative support varies each year, all students should learn to appreciate the opportunity to participate in the activity and realize that they can have an impact on the continuation of their program. Theorist on how leaders embed and transmit culture, Edgar Schein (1992) stresses that organizational leaders can instill values by teaching, role modeling, allocating rewards and status, organizational rites and rituals, stories, legends, and myths about people and events.

Directors of speech and debate programs should teach their students that participation in speech and debate is a privilege. Students quickly learn the educational value of the activity through participation but they are not always informed about the financial costs of the program. A senior debater who was on a debate scholarship at a university recently told me that he was shocked when he spoke to an outstanding debater and learned that the student's school did not have scholarships for debate. Suddenly he valued his scholarship much more. When my students are aware that we do not have enough funding for the year to attend many tournaments they are captive listeners and appreciative when I announce at a meeting that one young alumnus sent us $50 and an older alumnus contributed $1000. Providing information about what the contributing alumni are doing now helps students value the alumni as role models.

Rites and rituals are routines or traditions that can be used to teach students what will be expected of them as alumni. We have many traditional actions that are expected from the graduates of our speech and debate team. It has become a tradition at our university for a graduating senior to defer their plans for one year and to serve as a coach in either speech or debate or both. It is often referred to as the 'peace corps' job because the salary is so low. Many universities have such positions and we should all value the students who hold these positions for they are giving back to the activity. It is my recommendation that schools try to convince their own students to coach at their university for it establishes an

important tradition for other students at the school to follow. Eight Cornell students have held our one year 'peace corps' position. Their commitment to speech and debate did not end after their year of coaching. The eight individuals have become a subgroup of the alumni that holds a bond of promised commitment to the program in some form.

Rites and rituals can be followed to honor alumni. Rites of integration (Hackman & Johnson 1996) assist in tying subgroups to the large system. A yearly tournament and end- of- the- year awards ceremony can be used to integrate alumni with the team. Rites and rituals can be followed to honor alumni on these occasions. Each year we make it a practice to invite an alumnus to be our guest speaker at our awards brunch. The speaker is asked to speak about what it was like when they were on the team and how the activity has influenced their life and career. A team member is chosen to introduce the alumnus and the team officers host a dinner for the speaker the evening before the brunch. This has become such an honor for alumni that they are eager to be invited to speak. A special Alumni Award called "Friend of Forensics" is presented each year at the awards ceremony to publicly celebrate an individual who contributed the most to the program. Traditionally this award goes to an older alumnus who was capable of making financial contributions.

At our annual speech and debate tournament alumni are invited to come back and judge without payment. The alumni are honored at a special dinner of gourmet pizza and beverages. Team members serve the food and pictures of returning alumni are taken to symbolize their support. Generally this group is composed of recent graduates who make excellent judges.

All universities and college speech and debate programs have stories and legends. Retelling them is extremely valuable for embedding respect for alumni participation into the culture. When alumni make monetary or service contributions team members should be informed about the philanthropy along with a story about the person's team participation. Every year I tell a story to my novice debaters about a former debater and active alumna who now works for the U.S. Attorney General's office as a criminal litigator. At her first debate tournament she went into the ladies room to cry after her first debate round and it took much coaxing to get her to come back out and debate the next round. The story helps to relax beginning debaters and makes them much less intimidated to speak to the alumna when she comes back to help us with our tournament each year.

We should name student awards after the alumni who have helped us and instill their story as part of the culture of our program. Our most prestigious student award that is presented each year for excellence in competition and team service is called the Venephe Wilson award after a man who gave us the funds to establish our first endowment. Each year before the student is presented with the award a story is told at our awards ceremony in front of students, their parents, our administrators and professors about why F.R. Newman contributed to debate. In 1912 a woman named Venephe Wilson taught the children in the neighborhood of Churchville, New York how to debate to keep them out of trouble. Two of those children ,Howard Wilson and F.R. Newman, later wcn scholarships to Cornell and Howard was a member of the debating team. Even though Mr. Newman did not debate in college it was the activity that he respected the most and he honored Mrs. Wilson with a large financial contribution.

Routines, rites, rituals, stories and legends honor alumni and educate team members that alumni are valued and respected. Many tournaments are named after people who were professors and coaches and have passed on to honor their achievements and dedication to the activity. This is important. Including alumni in these recognitions especially while they are still living, will influence those students who do not plan to make a career out of the activity to be active alumni who are committed to the continuation of the program.

ALUMNI RELATIONS

Work with your development/alumni relations office.
Create an alumni data base.
Keep alumni informed about your program.
Conduct demonstration debates and speeches for alumni.

Active forensics alumni will make financial contributions, serve as a link to the college, will voice support for the program, can answer survey research questions about the benefits of speech and debate, will recruit new students for the program, can network with each other, can help cut costs, and can ask others to make financial contributions. All of this can

happen with an effective alumni relations program. Before alumni can be informed about the program and relationships can be established you need their addresses.

Most university development or alumni relations offices keep active lists of alumni addresses categorized by interests of the students as undergraduates. A list of debaters or members of individual events teams and regions of the United States where most of them live should be easily generated by their computers, but development offices have different systems and use different data bases. It is very important to work within the system of your university development office. Our program works carefully with Maya Gasuk, Director of Development in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Although the university attempts to keep records of our alumni she recommended that we set up our own data base. We use FileMaker Pro by Claris that is also used by Cornell Development. We can send updated addresses and information to Maya so that she can download into our data base or vice versa. This system allows both people to have the information. Information in our data base fits the philosophy of our specific program. In addition to addresses we indicate whether the alumnus was on the speech or debate team, where they work, and what type of support (monetary or service) they have given the program over the years.

Many directors have informed me that development offices have refused to give them addresses. They don't want the alumni to be contacted for financial contributions because the university wants to have control over where and to whom money is contributed. This is the number one reason why directors should begin collecting information about their graduates. Gasuk (1996) emphasizes that "good records give effective negotiating power." If the office refuses to give you a list, some compelling arguments are that you have a list of addresses of recent alumni and that you would like to share them and you want the addresses to inform alumni about the success of your program by newsletter. A good development office understands the advantages of publicizing a successful program. (Lord 1987) When you inform the development office that you are able to assist them in their work they may be more willing to promote your program and to help you set up an alumni relations program. Information from the database can be used to invite alumni to speak at your annual awards ceremony, to garner support for your program, to answer research questions, and if desired to establish an alumni association. If the university will not allow you to directly solicit funds for speech and debate these suggested tactics should allow you to get your message across without officially asking alumni for financial contributions.

If the speech and/or debate program is relatively new to your university or college requesting names of alumni who are in the hotel and restaurant business or airline industry may be beneficial. Development offices generally do not prohibit requests for reduced prices on hotel rooms, coupons for reduced air travel or discounts at restaurants. Gasuk (1996) also suggests partnering with the development office by offering to a hold a debate during reunion weekend and developing a mailing list based on those who attend. This suggestion will give a program visibility as well as a list of names.

Although much of this can be accomplished through a newsletter it is less expensive and faster to establish a listserv on the Internet for the purposes of communicating with alumni. See appendix A for how to set up a listserv and sample solicitation. Our listserv is managed by a work study student and is used to post the teams travel schedule with requests for housing and food, thank yous to those who housed and fed students, and results of tournaments. The alumni listserv can also be used for networking between alumni or between alumni and students for the purpose of obtaining employment or changing positions.

If your university or college is a private institution it may have clubs such as our Cornell (alumni) Clubs. They are an excellent source of support. Our clubs host events at their houses, local restaurants, or at schools. We are asked to give speech or debate demonstrations when we travel to tournaments. We have done thirty minute programs at schools, restaurants, and sometimes in living rooms across the country. Particularly, clubs far away from Cornell are eager to host an event. They have provided us with housing and dinners while we are competing and if we do an impressive presentation we often get financial contributions from guests. If your university has a club system there is generally a central office on campus. Our central office sends out our tournament calendar to clubs each year.

FUNDRAISING

Produce a brochure describing your program.
Put in data base or in writing interactions with alumni.
Speculative fundraising is a good way to start.
Focus on the few who do the most.
Long term nurturing yields the best results.

Secure sound technical and legal advice when establishing endowments.

Before you begin soliciting funds it is helpful to have a brochure that describes and advertises your program, direction from the development office, and a data base or paper trail of information about alumni. Often directors keep in their heads interactions and relationships with alumni. This is an inadequate method because it takes years to raise funds for endowments and it is important for the information to be passed on year after year. Knowing about givers is one of the most important facets of fundraising.

According to David Dunlop, Director of Special Gifts at Cornell University there are several methods of fundraising including speculative fund raising, individualized fund raising, and nurturing fund raising. Since they know little about fundraising it is most common for directors of speech and debate programs to participate in speculative fundraising. Speculative fundraising emphasizes asking for the gift. It is based on the speculation that if you ask enough alumni for gifts, they will respond and make your effort worthwhile. Our team has used this method by mailing letters to alumni or participating in phonothons asking for money for endowments or travel. The time and resources invested in this type of fundraising are directed toward asking, not investing in developing a relationship or sense of commitment to a program. My team has used the speculative fundraising method about every five years and we have raised anywhere from $500 to $3,000 each time. We have added this money with individual alumni contributions throughout the years and have established a Forensics Coaching Endowment Fund. Carrie Crenshaw, Director of Debate at University of Alabama, suggests that establishment of the endowment, target amount, and names of donors should be placed in the yearly newsletter or Internet publicity.

Speculative fundraising, according to Gasuk, can also help identify contributors who have the interest and capacity to make larger gifts. If you are a new director of forensics, or if your development office is not a close partner, this is a helpful way to identify givers. Search for those that give a larger amount than the rest of your group on a regular basis. Start to pay attention when these gifts come in, and begin to think of ways to involve that person in your program through the alumni relations programs you have in place.

If you are interested in fundraising for more substantial gifts it is important to focus on the few who do the most. Nine out of every ten dollars given to universities are contributed by individuals. Dunlop says: "1% of the givers give 70% of the money; 10% of the givers

give 95% of the money." This is why individualized fund raising is more lucrative for speech and debate programs in the long run. Individualized fund raising focuses on asking but more importantly, time and resources are invested in preparing the alumnus for the request. For example, it is important for a potential donor to learn and become aware of the success and educational value of your program, and even be involved in its support in a non-monetary way before they are asked to make a contribution.

Dunlop emphasizes that individualized fund raising is used to solicit special gifts and to increase the size of regular gifts but that nurturing fund raising concentrates on building, over time, a sense of commitment to the program so that the donor makes the program a priority for giving. You may have a particular alumnus in mind or your university development office may solicit interest in speech or debate and identify an alumnus for you to nurture. If they will not help you the nurturing can begin with the students on your team. My students and I were allowed to nurture an alumnus who had expressed interest in debate. Our nurturing relationship lasted for ten years. I wrote letters to him on a weekly basis about the success of our team and my struggle to build a program at our university. My students enlarged the print on our annual newsletter especially for him since he was in his nineties. We delivered Cornell orchard apples and maple syrup as gifts and invited his assistant to come and watch debates when we competed near his home. Our students were told that no matter what, the emphasis should be put on making sure that the assistant understood the debate. The students made special cards for his birthday and wrote notes about what benefits they were receiving from the speech and debate program. He became one of my most valued mentors. The investment in time developed a wonderful rewarding friendship with an individual who grew to love debate so much his yearly contribution grew from $1,000 a year to $10,000 and he established a half of million dollar endowment upon his death which will allow debate to continue at Cornell forever. I was told that his contribution was so large because he saw the money go directly to the students. I was honored by being chosen to speak at his memorial service along with our university president, Frank D. Rhodes. We continue to honor F.R. Newman with the story about his support each year at our awards brunch so that all students in our program recognize his contributions.

The Newman Venephe Wilson endowment was carefully worded by our legal advisers so that the money can be used for tournament travel, registration, judging, coaching, supplies, and other forensics activities. The Newman and coaching endowments allow us to spend the annual interest or to return the earnings to the principal value. The amount of interest

varies according to the university's success in investing. Gasuk warns that when establishing an endowment it is important to work with the development office to secure technically proficient legal advice. Many universities have endowments that can no longer be used because they were too specific and are no longer relevant to current programs. For example some universities have endowments to host tournaments. The program may face a double bind because they have money to host a tournament but no money for tournament travel or registration fees.

Every university has its own policies for establishing endowments and for how they may be used. That is why it is important to establish a working relationship with your university development office. I have shared my endowment examples with you so you can inform your university how our endowments were established and how they are managed.

Funds for endowments can be garnered from many different sources. Benjamin Franklin's two hundred year old formula still holds true today!

> My practice is to go first to those who may be counted upon to be favorable, who know the cause and believe in it, and ask them to give as generously as possible. When they have done so, I go next to those who may be presumed to have a favorable opinion and to be disposed to listening, and secure their adherence. Lastly, I go to those who know little of the matter or have no known predilection for it and influence them by presentation of the names of those who have already given.

Start with your students on your team and make sure that they believe in the cause and advertise it by preparing them to be active alumni. Next identify and inform the alumni who have valued their education in speech and debate that you need their assistance. Recognize them through stories, rites and rituals for their service and financial contributions. Their support will encourage your university to do more and others to join in and support the cause. Both students and alumni will be rewarded by watching others follow their lead and knowing that speech and debate will live on for students to come.

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APPENDIX A

October 27, 1996

Dear Alumni and Friends:

Hope that you all had an enjoyable summer. Signs of fall are already starting to appear on the Cornell campus with the changing color of the leaves. This year's speech and debate season is already in full swing. We just completed the 1894 Debates and are preparing for the British Debates this week.

The Cornell Forensics Society Web page is online and running. The Internet address is:

http://weave.forensics.cornell.edu/

From this page you can access the tournament calendar, check tournament results through the ASIST Web page, or take a photo tour of the Alumni page. Another way to keep in touch with the team is through the Cornell Forensics Alumni Association Listserv. To subscribe to the list, send the following message to: listproc@cornell.edu:

SUBSCRIBE CFAA-L YOUR NAME
(Insert your name, not your e-mail address, following CFAA-L)

To post messages to the list, send them to CFAA-L@cornell.edu. If you have any questions about this list, send them to James Dumas at dumas@gonzaga.edu. The list will be used to post tournament results and travel schedules.

Finally, if you are able to judge or house students at any of the tournaments listed on our tournament schedule, please reply on the enclosed form and return it to jwt5@cornell.edu.

Sincerely,

Jeff Tompkins

Jeffrey Tompkins (Cornell University undergraduate, 1997, work-study student for the Dept. of Communication) has written the Appendix for this paper.

JUDGING

Tournament _____

I can judge on the following days: _____
(Please specify if you are available to judge the entire day or only during certain times).

Tournament _____

I can judge on the following days: _____
(Please specify if you are available to judge the entire day or only during certain times).

Tournament _____

I can judge on the following days: _____
(Please specify if you are available to judge the entire day or only during certain times).

Tournament _____

I can judge on the following days: _____
(Please specify if you are available to judge the entire day or only during certain times).

HOUSING

Tournament _____

Number of people you are able to house:_____

Tournament _____

Number of people you are able to house:_____

Tournament _____

Number of people you are able to house:_____

Tournament _____

Number of people you are able to house:_____

What is a LISTSERV?

A LISTSERV is simply an organized way of using electronic mail. A computer called a server is used to collect messages and then send each message to a list of recipients. The LISTSERV enables the user to submit a message to a number of recipients rather than having to address the message separately to each individual on the list.

LISTSERVs and Correspondence

LISTSERVs are being used by a large number of organizations to increase the ease and efficiency of correspondence. CEDA-L and IE-L are both email lists that allow anyone to post a message that will be received by all of the members of the lists. Members of the list may then post a reply on the list for all members to see or may reply separately to the person who posted the message. The LISTSERV acts as a public forum where ideas can be shared and feedback solicited on a wide range of topics. Additionally, for more specialized groups such as the executive board of an organization, a list may be individualized so that only the executive board members of that organization are able to make and receive postings.

Getting Started

In order to create a LISTSERV, you must write to the List Manager at your college/university requesting the creation of a new list. You should designate someone with a background in computing and a good understanding of electronic mail to act as the owner of the list. Here are some to the important commands necessary to create and run a LISTSERV:

- To subscribe to the list, send the following message to the listproc:

  Subscribe (Insert the name of the LISTSERV) Your Name

- To digest messages sent to your email account:

  Set (Insert the name of the LISTSERV) mail digest

- To send a message to the list, make sure to address the message to the address for the specific list, not to the listproc.

Getting Assistance

You should consult the computing resource assistance center at your individual college/university for specific information on how to start and maintain a list. Each school is likely to have different protocol and/or requirements for running a list. However, the commands for defining and using a list are nearly always the same. For more information on how to use a list in general, see the Cornell Information Technology (CIT) web page on LISTSERVs on the internet at:

http://www.cit.cornell.edu/cit-pubs/email/using-lists.html